



**EUPHEMISM OF POLITICAL NEWS  
IN *REPUBLIKA* ONLINE MASS MEDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research deals with euphemism which is found in political news in *Republika* mass media. The objectives of this were: (1) to investigate the types of euphemism used in political news in online mass media, (2) to describe the realization of euphemism in political news in mass media and (3) to explain the reason for realization of euphemism in political news in mass media. The research design of this study was descriptive qualitative research where the researcher explained the result of research by describing the data gained. There were 26 news with different titles with 54 euphemism. There were ten types of euphemism found in political news in *Republika* online mass media, namely indirection 31.4 %, abstraction 12.9 %, agreement 11.1%, remodeling 9.2%, semantic shift 9.2%, emotive 7.4%, understatement 5.5%, widening 5.5%, borrowing 3.7%, circumlocution 3.7%. Furthermore there were four ways of euphemism realized namely, implicit, explicit, direct, and indirect. Then there were five reasons using the euphemism found in political news in *Republika*, namely to cohesive, to protective, to underhand, to uplifting, and to ludic. The most reason using euphemism is to cohesive.

*Keywords: Euphemism, Political News, Republika Mass Media*

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**INTRODUCTION**

Euphemism is a universal linguistic phenomenon. As Allan and Burridge (2012) proposed that euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offence, that of the

audience, or some third party. As explained by Allan and Burrige above, euphemisms are used to avoid utterances that hurt someone's heart or speech that is not worth saying.

Furthermore, Alvestad (2014) define euphemism is “a word or an expression which is delicate and inoffensive and is used to replace or cover a term that seems to be either taboo, too harsh or simply inappropriate for a given conversational exchange” and is “the substitution of a more pleasant or less direct word for an unpleasant or distasteful one. According to this definition, Duda mention that euphemism in language is possible appears in the form of words and expressions.

Euphemism are needed because of several reasons, they are: 1) (Allan 2012) argues that euphemism used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face. 2) Euphemism used to replace or cover up other words and expressions considered taboo, rude and inappropriate (Alvestad 2014). 3) Euphemism is used to avoid saying taboo words (Fromklin, 2005).

News is very important in our daily life. Sumadiria (2005) argues that news is the fastest report on the latest ideas or facts that are true, interesting and important for most people, through periodic media such as newspapers, radio, television, or internet media. News can be said as a report about an event that is happening or the latest information about an event. It is a fact that is considered important to be immediately conveyed to the public.

Political news/journalism is a broad branch of journalism that includes coverage of all aspects of politics and political science, although the term usually refers specifically to coverage of civil governments and political power. Political journalism aims to provide voters with the information to formulate their own opinion and participate in community, local or national matters that will affect them.

The gap was found by the researcher, that is the politicians are expected to deliver their speech by using euphemism because in order to avoid the harsh or inappropriate word. By using euphemism they can maintain self esteem and not directly accuse the parties concerned.

However, in reality euphemism is used not only to replace words that are considered rude but can hide the real meaning and also describing something which makes the sounds more pleasant. Here the example of preliminary data from news of politic in Republika online mass media.

*UBN (Ustadz Bachtiar Nasir) sedianya diperiksa pada Rabu (8/5) sebagai tersangka dalam kasus dugaan pidana penggelapan. Mantan ketua Gerakan Nasional Pengawal Fatwa*

*Majelis Ulama Indonesia (GNPF-MUI) ini diduga menggelapkan dana YKUS dalam kegiatan Aksi Massa 411 dan 212 pada 2017. Namun, UBN tidak hadir. (Republika.co.id)*

(UBN (Ustadz Bachtiar Nasir) was originally examined on Wednesday (8/5) as a suspect in a case of *alleged embezzlement*. The former chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council Fatwa Guard National Movement (GNPF-MUI) is suspected of embezzling YKUS funds in Mass Action 411 and 212 activities in 2017. However, UBN was not present. (Republika.co.id)

The first example above contained an euphemism. Based on the case, UBN was the person who initiated the 411 and 212 actions in May last time. UBN formed a foundation for the action namely YKUS (Justice Foundation for All). The donors who are willing to fund the action can communicate directly with UBN as the initiator of the foundation. However, UBN did not allocate the funds collected for the action, so UBN was accused of embezzling funds. The word "*embezzlement*" in the news above is an alternative word to describe the real meaning. In this case, UBN did not get the accusation directly but was still in the estimation stage. But the evidence that states that UBN is guilty is very real, namely by not allocating the funds he received for the action that was held. The word *embezzlement* above are in accordance with Murphy's (2010) theory which stated that euphemism is defining as an alternative way of describing something which makes it sound more pleasant than it really is.

## **Euphemism**

Euphemism is a universal linguistic phenomenon. As Allan and Burridge (2012) proposed that euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offence, that of the audience, or some third party. As explained by Allan and Burridge above, euphemisms are used to avoid utterances that hurt someone's heart or speech that is not worth saying.

An unlimited number of examples can be easily cited from most formal writing styles to most colloquial everyday spoken language. English speakers, for example, would consider words such as "disinformation" and "call of nature" as more acceptable and less offensive than their blunt counterparts "lie" and "urge to urinate or defecate" and will there for use them more frequently in their communication with other members of the society.

Furthermore, Duda (2014) define euphemism is "a word or an expression which is delicate and inoffensive and is used to replace or cover a term that seems to be either taboo,

too harsh or simply inappropriate for a given conversational exchange” and is “the substitution of a more pleasant or less direct word for an unpleasant or distasteful one. According to this definition, Duda mention that euphemism in language is possible appears in the form of words and expressions. These words and expressions are called euphemisms when used to replace or cover up other words and expressions considered taboo, rude and inappropriate. So, it can be said that euphemism are substitute words and expressions that are more pleasant and not directly compared to the words and phrases they replaced.

Euphemism is a part of semantics. Semantic means the study about meaning of words, phrases, and sentence structure. Yule (1996:114) mentioned that “Semantics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and entities in the world; that is, how words literally connect to things.” In other word, semantics is commonly is considered to be the study of meaning in language or the study of linguistics reference and truth conditions in language. However, Cutting (2002) defined that semantics is the study of what words mean regardless its context. The meaning of words depend on themselves, not context nor anything else.

Euphemism words and expressions allow someone to talk about unpleasant things and ‘neutralize’ the unpleasantness. Fromklin (2005), euphemism is used to avoid saying taboo words. Wardhaugh (2000) argues that taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate circumlocution, i.e. euphemistically. Tabooed subjects can vary widely: sex, death, illness, excretion, bodily functions, religious matters, the supernatural. But quite often they extend to other aspects of social life.

Wilson (2001) defined euphemisms as words with meanings or sounds thought somehow to be nicer, cleaner or more elevated and so used as substitutes for words deemed unpleasant, crude or ugly in sound sense. Wardhaugh (2010) defines euphemism refers to certain thing are not said, not because people do not talk about those things but this talked about it in roundabout way. Furthermore, Cruse (2006) defines euphemism as an expression that refers to something that people hesitate to mention lest it cause offence, but which lessens the offensiveness by referring indirectly in some way. Pavlenko (2006) define euphemism is to protect speakers from undesired emotional arousal. In the other hand Mayfield (2009) has noted that euphemisms sanitize and camouflage actions, things, or events that could appear unacceptable in light of professed values. In line with this Lacone

(2003) has commented that euphemisms can also hide seemingly simple and straightforward words behind deceptive or overly complex ones. Therefore Euphemism Murphy (2010) is defined as an alternative way of describing something which makes it sound more pleasant than it really is.

### **Types of Euphemism**

Euphemism is classified into five types (Williams 1975; Shipley 1977; Rawson 1995; Neaman & Silver 1983; Allan & Burridge 1991) as follows: (1) Shortening (2) Circumlocution (3) Remodeling (4) Semantic Change (5) Borrowing.

#### **Shortening**

When encountering words which dare not mention, it replaces them with a shortened word. There are number of different processes:

- 1) Abbreviation: Rawson (1995) states that words which may create dismay if used in public are acceptable when shortened to their initial letters e.g. B.S> (bullshit) and T.S (transsexual). A shortened word such as Ladies (Ladies' room) is also included in this type.
- 2) Apocopation: This process can be defined as the way to shorten or omit the last syllable of word e.g. Vamp of Vampire.
- 3) Back formation: According to Neaman and Silver (1983), to back form words refers to the substitution of one part of speech with a shortened form for another. The word burgle which is derived from burglar, is a euphemism for rob.
- 4) Diminutive: This procedure is the formation of a new term by shortening a name and adding a suffix to indicate affection or smallness. For example, the word buttocks is euphemized by heinie which is the diminutive of hind end.
- 5) Omission: This involves leaving out letters of taboo words after the initial, such as f--- for having sex, or s---instead of shit (Allan and Burridge, 1991).
- 6) Clipping: clipping is the deletion of some part of a longer word to give a shorter word with the same meaning e.g. nation (damnation).

#### **Circumlocution**

Allan and Burridge (1991) call using longer expressions circumlocution. Euphemisms which which have more letters and syllables are deployed in place of a single one. E.g little girl's room means a toilet.

## Remodeling

The sound of words can be altered to conceal something that is offensive. This can involve a variety of processes of largely verbal play (Allan and Burridge, 1991).

- 1) Phonological Distortion: Euphemism can be created when the speakers intentionally distort the pronunciation of words. For instance, expressions for hell is euphemized by heck or shit by shite or shoot.
- 2) Blending: Blending is formed by squeezing together two or more words both orthographically and phonetically. For example, the word *gezunda* (a chamber pot), which is derived from the fact that this object goes under the bed.
- 3) Reduplication: Reduplication, a repetition of a syllable or letter of a word, it is particularly present in children's bathroom vocabulary such as pee-pee (piss), widdle-diddles (testicles), tuzzy muzzy (vagina), and rantum-scantum (copulate).

## Semantic Change

A number of semantic processes can be tools to create new euphemisms:

- 1) Semantic Shift: Semantic shift, with reference to Rawson (1995), is the substitution of the whole, or a similar generality, for the specific part do not choose to discuss. For example, rear end becomes bottom, or to sleep with somebody is transformed into go to bed with somebody.
- 2) Metaphorical Transfer: This procedure is a comparison of things of one order to things of another such as comparison of one flower to another variety. Therefore, the word pimple is euphemized as blossom.
- 3) Widening: When becoming too painful or vivid, a specific term is moved up in the ladder of abstraction. e.g. solid human waste (feces).
- 4) Litotes: this type of euphemism is created by replacing a word with the negative expression of its opposite. Thus, we may say untidy or unclean
- 5) Understatement: Understatement reduces the risk in showing an apparent meaning. For example, a nuclear reactor that is said to be critical is actually out of control and an active defense means an attack (Rawson, 1995).
- 6) Indirection: Too touchy topic and terms may be alluded to in various ways by mentioning one aspect of the subject, or even by saying what it is not. An assembly center is an indirect euphemism for prison.
- 7) Abstraction: Some words (it, problem, situation, and thing) help cast ideas in the widest possible terms and make ideal cover-up words.

## **Borrowing**

- 1) **External Borrowing:** According to Rawson (1995), most taboo words are usually rendered in French or Latin. For example, *affaire*, *amour*, and *liaison* are euphemisms for love.
- 2) **Internal Borrowing;** Euphemisms can also be form different sublanguages such as jargons or technical terms. For instance, a disease such as syphilis can be made less offensive by using technical jargon as treponemal diseases, luetic disease, or spirachortal disease (Allan and Burr ridge, 1991).

## **The Process of Realizing Euphemism**

There are some ways of realization euphemism by Allan (2012), namely:

- 1) **Implicit:** Implicit refers to implied though not directly expressed; inherent in the nature of something. In this study, many words explained meaning implicitly. It means that the reader have to comprehending the meaning deeply and based on the situation of the context.
- 2) **Explicit:** Explicit refers to something that is specific, clear, or detailed. Not only in mass media but also in others, there will be a message which delivered explicitly.
- 3) **Direct:** Direct refers to aim something in a particular direction or at a particular person. To make this process clear, the example in this following :
- 4) **Indirect:** Indirect refer to not immediate point person or thing to an action is done. The example of this will be shown in this following.

## **The Reason for the Use of Euphemism**

Kate Burr ridge (2012) proposes six reasons of euphemism, which are:

- (1) Protective euphemism

Protective euphemism *“to shield and to avoid offense”*. This function is used when we have to talk about one thing in different contexts, but for one reason or another we would prefer to speak carefully in order to avoid offense.

- (2) Underhand Euphemism

Underhand euphemism *“to mystify and to misrepresent”*. Some people might say that all euphemism is dishonest.

- (3) Uplifting Euphemism

Uplifting euphemism *“to talk up and to inflate”*. Many euphemisms are simply alternative for expressions speakers prefer not to use on a given context.

(4) Provocative Euphemism

Provocative euphemism “*to reveal and to inspire*”. The function to reveal here means exploiting euphemism to publically expound taboo topics.

(5) Cohesive Euphemism

Cohesive euphemism “*to show solidarity and to help define the gang*”. Taboos are among the common values that link the people of a community together; they become a sign of social cohesion.

(6) Ludic Euphemism

Ludic euphemism “*to have fun and to entertain*”. This function create euphemism is largely to amuse.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative design to explain euphemism of political news in Republika online mass media. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) described that qualitative was descriptive, where data is in the form of words or pictures rather than number.

The sources of the data in this study are political news in Republika online on 19 July 2019. Uma (2006) stated that in qualitative research, if the population is less than 30 then all population can be as sampled. It means from 26 news in a day, the researcher took all the news to be analyzed in this research.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In this research findings, the researcher elaborated findings after analyzing the data as follows,

1. There are ten types of euphemism of political news in Republika online mass media. Eight are the same with Allan’s theory and three again found by the researcher as the new concept of euphemism itself. The ten types namely, indirection, agreement, abstraction, remodeling, emotive, semantic shift, understatement, widening, borrowing, and circumlocution. The two new types itself namely agreement and emotive. There are 17 indirection 31.4%, 7 abstraction 12.9%, 6 agreement 11.1%, 5 remodelling 9.2%, 5 semantic shift 9.2%, 4 emotive 7.4%, 3 understatement 5.5%, 3 widening 5.5%, 2 borrowing 3.7%, 2 circumlocution 3.7%.



2. The ways of euphemism realized in political news in Republika mass media conveyed implicit, explicit, direct and indirectly. The most way which found in news of politic was indirect. It means that the most euphemism which found there was all the issues, it was true or not, the thing are discussed indirectly by using other word or the appropriate word to describe the situation happened.
3. Reason of using euphemism in this research use theory of Kate Burridge (2012), according to him, there are six reasons of euphemism, which are: the protective euphemism. Second is the underhand euphemism. The third is uplifting euphemism. The four is provocative euphemism The fifth is cohesive uephemism and the last is ludic euphemism. But not all reason of the Burridge' theory found in this research. There are only five reasons which found by the researcher based on data obtained namely cohesive, protective, underhand, uplifting and ludic euphemism.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

This study have two types of euphemism in political news outside Allan's theory (2012). The researchers found a type of euphemism that was different from the type contained in Allan's theory. After collecting data the researchers then grouped the data. After the data is grouped, there is the same type between the Allan type theory and the type found by the researcher but with a different type name but in the actual sense the type found by the researcher is the same as the type contained in Allan's theory. Types of euphemism in Allan's theory (2012) there are indirection, abstraction, widening, semantic shift, circumlocution, understatement, borrowing and remodeling. Based on data on political news, researchers found two types of euphemism outside the discussion of Allan's theory, namely emotive and agreement. All the two of these findings have been explained by researchers above.

Based on the data obtained by researchers, there are different types of names, but compiled in the same type of Allan's theory (2012). The researcher makes the name of the type by looking at the situation from the news context which is the data in this study. Although in the same context, but with different situations, the researcher makes the name of the type of euphemism based on the context of the conditions depicted in one story.

Researchers find these differences by looking at the context contained in the data obtained by researchers. Previous research has discussed euphemism in political news, to see the difference between previous research and my research will be described as follows:

Fernandez (2014) analyzed euphemism in British Regional Press about political discourse also. He found that euphemism mostly by understatement, litotes and underspecification for a variety of purposes, namely sensitivity to audience concerns, avoidance of expressions that can be perceived to marginalize socially disadvantaged groups, polite criticism and mitigation – even concealment – of unsettling topics. While, in my research also found the same function of euphemism namely concealment. The politicians use concealment to hide things that can cause things that are not desirable or avoid violations.

Therefore, it is line with Shemshurenko (2015), He also found the same reason of euphemism. He analyzed political euphemism in mass media. In his research, euphemism is used to camouflaging the reality. While, in my research, from the data obtained euphemism is used to camouflage also but not the reality however actions, make the wrong action look as usual.

On the other hand, Abidi (2015) investigated the euphemistic constructions that featured Blair's political discourse. The critical scrutiny of this rhetorical strategy revealed that, along with being a function of social cognition, its use was constrained and organized by the epistemic Knowledge device (K-device) of Blair' context model. The analysis also concluded that Tony Blair opted for euphemism, as a source of transgression, to legitimize his political actions and sustain his ideological or hegemonic ends. Meanwhile, one of the findings of my research is euphemism used to camouflage not on political action but also on political statement.

Mofarrej (2015) explained that euphemistic death expression in Jordania used based on certain situation. In addition, males and females used different expressions only when trying to reduce the painful effects of someone's death. The weakness of his paper is the author did not explain the aims of his research. In present the theory the author used the good theory related to his topic. It is one of the strengthness in his paper. And the theory also become a good contribution for researcher if have the same topic.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings, the conclusion are described after analyzing the data as follows: the researcher found ten types of euphemism in Republika online mass media. Eight types from Allan's theory (2012) and two more types are found by the researcher based on data obtained and based on the situation that depicted in the context. So, totally types are ten. Ten types of euphemism found in political news in Republika online mass media by the researcher namely indirection, abstraction, agreement, remodeling, semantic shift, emotive,

understatement, widening, borrowing, and circumlocution. The most dominant and also the highest types use by the politician is Indirection (31.4%). Two types as the new types based on the situation after analyzing the data, they are agreement and emotive.

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